

Cancer

Report on Study of Service Needs of Some Cancer Patients in California

THE CALIFORNIA DIVISION of the American Cancer Society announces the completion of a four-year study on the non-medical service needs of cancer patients. The existing service program of the Society includes referral, information on community resources, surgical dressings, transportation assistance, and loan of sick room equipment. In the past, the service program of the Cancer Society varied somewhat from county to county. Consequently, the study was designed to determine the most important needs of cancer patients. It was hoped that from this information, a more uniform and intelligent service program could be created. Throughout the study, the Commission on Cancer has given medical consultation and direction to the research project.

The data were obtained primarily from interviews with physicians, patients and relatives, for patients hospitalized in eight hospitals in five California communities. The final sample consisted of 876 cancer patients, selected randomly in each hospital. Both voluntary and county (public) hospitals were included.

Analysis of cancer site distribution shows a distribution fairly comparable to that of the Tumor Registry of the California Department of Public Health. The patients, as would be expected, are older, less educated, and with less annual income than the general public.

Some key findings are: one out of eight diagnosed cancer patients, and one in four of the physicians reported failure or delay in carrying out the recommended treatment plan completely. Some of the reasons were emotional problems of the patient, fear of hospitalization or surgery, and difficulties in arranging transportation or resolving home responsibilities.

There was an increase in service needs following hospitalization. Fifty per cent of the patients had two or more chronic conditions, and there were major limitations in usual activity in 16 per cent. There was general agreement in the discernment of the need for and securing of services. A substantial proportion of respondents listed: drugs, discussion of personal problems, transportation, dressings, nursing care at home, household assistance, and recreation at home as major service needs.

For more detailed analysis and discussion, the interested physician should refer to the complete report. Copies of the 75-page study (including 38 tables) may be obtained on request to the California Division, American Cancer Society, 875 O'Farrell Street, San Francisco 9, California.

The California Division of the American Cancer Society is now studying the report and is planning such revisions to its service program as are necessary. No changes will be made without considered judgment by the Commission on Cancer of the California Medical Association and those physicians who serve on the state and county committees and boards of the American Cancer Society.

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Antivivisection

DEPRESSING AND URGENT is the information that the antivivisectionists are on the move once more. This time, their threat is much more serious than any time in the past. Heartened by the success of a humane slaughter bill, these people are determined to deliver restrictive legislation against medical research at the new session of Congress.

In late September, 1962, hearings were held on the Moulder and Griffiths Bills. Marching under the banner of "humane societies" the proponents of the bills received cordial and sympathetic treatment before the committee. Following conclusion of the hearings, the subcommittee chairman declared: "There will be some sort of protective legislation enacted at the next session of Congress."

False and misleading attacks on the entire field of medical investigation must be met with truth. People must be told that the humane care and humane treatment of laboratory animals are the rule rather than the exception. By now, it is apparent that even this is not enough.

The best counter-strategy is to launch sensible legislation to provide for even better care, through research, construction of facilities, training, and dissemination of information on humane care and treatment of laboratory animals.

When the antivivisectionists make their next move you will be alerted to respond and encourage response of others against restrictive legislation and in favor of our progressive bill.

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